

Achieving more together:

TKAT drives digital transformation through strategic partnerships

TKAT (The Kemnal Academies Trust) is one of the largest Multi-Academy Trusts in the South and East of England with 45 Special, Primary, Secondary and All Through Academies in the TKAT Family.

Within the #oneTKATfamily, the aim is to work together as a community of schools to ensure that every child, whatever their background, receives a high-quality education. The Trust's purpose 'Achieving More Together', has been a fundamental pillar in digital transformation, with Director of IT & Data, Chris Clarke, pioneering standardised procurement partnerships to deliver maximum value for schools, and maximum impact on teaching and learning.

With a career that spans teaching, leadership and IT, Chris brought a holistic perspective to the transformation vision. Crucially, it didn't start with technology. It started with finding an expert partner who could take a consultative approach and then see this through to implementation over several years.

"Effective transformation is built on partnerships, not purchasing contracts," explains Chris. "When we introduced a new strategy and improvement framework, we had clear milestones to meet – these included infrastructure and interactive screens. So, before deciding what we wanted to do with the technology, we looked for a partner who could support us through the whole process."

From consultation to decision

Starting with a mixed front-of-class estate, which included a range of interactive display brands, projectors, and commercial TV screens, Chris emphasised the importance of setting [TKAT](#) up for the future, rather than being influenced by any legacy investments. "Schools had historically managed their own display purchasing, typically buying one or two units at a time, and not necessarily the same set-ups," continues Chris. "Our priority was to standardise for the future and ensure that we fully explored the solutions available. Not just in relation to the hardware and software, but also the wider training, services, and support the schools could access."

TKAT entrusted this process to OfficeXpress. Offering IT managed services and solutions for education, OfficeXpress takes a consultative approach to service delivery and brings in specialist partners to meet the Trust's unique needs.

As part of a wider framework tender, [Promethean](#) was proposed as an OEM solution. After full evaluation of all tenders, including hands-on testing, OfficeXpress with the Promethean solution was chosen.

"OfficeXpress was a valuable partner and extremely thorough in appraising our needs. By conducting a market-wide evaluation, we could make an informed decision on which front-of-class solution would best evolve with us over time," explains Chris.



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"While budget pressures led us to consider TV screens and visualisers as an option, the detailed consultation demonstrated that the total cost of ownership was not as competitive as you'd expect. Moreover, we were looking for long-term value that would positively impact teaching and learning. We couldn't see this being possible with TV screens, but it was exactly the package on offer from Promethean."



Flexibility by design

The flexibility of Promethean's ActivPanel LX meant TKAT could partner with one manufacturer but also offer schools flexibility to align tech with their preferred pedagogical approach.

Chris believes that the ActivPanel LX presented value for money and greater pedagogical flexibility than other front-of-class solutions on the market. With the option to add an OPS-A compute device to the panel, schools can configure the set-up according to budget and the functionality they need.

"The ActivPanel LX gives teachers the flexibility to choose the best way forward for them," continues Chris. "It has all the essentials you need, helping teachers to deliver knowledge with impact and then check that knowledge transfer."

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Trusted to deliver

By centralising AV and infrastructure procurement with OfficeXpress, all TKAT schools benefit from a transparent partnership built on trust and education expertise. Leading the development of a service that makes it simple for schools to upgrade their existing front-of-class solutions, OfficeXpress has triangulated a partnership with Promethean and Askelite to provide a full wrap-around service.

"It's seamless. When a school is ready to upgrade, OfficeXpress arranges a site survey ahead of installation, then keeps the school updated through the whole process," explains Chris.

"After Askelite installs the ActivPanel LX, they take the packaging away with the old kit for recycling. Once the school is ready, the Promethean team springs into action to deliver training appropriate to the teachers' journeys. From my perspective, this process is working like clockwork. It's no stress for the schools, and it protects my team's time to focus on more strategic priorities."

A valued partnership

By the time the transformation programme is complete, more than 700 Promethean ActivPanels will have been installed throughout TKAT's schools. This large-scale and phased implementation demonstrates how putting partnership at the heart of procurement delivers value across the board.

"We benefit from a 360-degree package of product, service and support, all delivered in a collaborative way across all the specialist partners," says Chris. "No evidence of complacency. Simply a shared commitment to a long-term partnership where everyone is focused on delivering value." As TKAT continues its journey in partnership with OfficeXpress, Askelite and Promethean, Chris is confident that the impact is being made where it's needed most – in the classroom.

"A good teacher can still teach without tech, but through our teaching and learning team and ActivPanel adoption, we're supporting our teachers on a journey. We've made it frictionless for schools to implement the tech, but by providing access to ongoing training and development, the ActivPanel is embedded in a Trust-wide pedagogical approach to teaching, alongside traditional paper and pen, and visualisers."

Reflecting on how far the Trust has come in just a few years, Chris shares how he feels about the progress: "Through a partnership built on trust and mutual respect, TKAT has succeeded in transforming technology provision across our existing school estate, showing that we really can achieve more together."